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Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 20 October 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 19 October 2016, addressed to you by the representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mehmet Dânâ (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41 and 73 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Güven **Begeç**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 20 October 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 5 August 2016, addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly (A/70/1008). The arguments put forward in the aforementioned letter are fundamentally flawed, as they are based on the false assumption that the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus has the legal, political or moral right to represent, or act on behalf of, the island as a whole. The fact of the matter is that, since the forcible destruction of the 1960 partnership Republic of Cyprus in 1963, there has not been a joint administration on the island capable of representing both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

Needless to say, the natural resources in and around Cyprus belong to both peoples of the island. It is thus unfortunate that the Greek Cypriot administration insists on taking unilateral steps at the expense of the inherent and equal rights of the Turkish Cypriot people over these resources. The views of the Turkish Cypriot side regarding the hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities of the Greek Cypriot administration have already been recorded in the relevant United Nations documents (A/69/675-S/2014/915 and A/68/902). Similarly, in view of the attempts of the Greek Cypriot side to create a fait accompli vis-à-vis the issue of hydrocarbons, Turkey, as a neighbouring country, has also put on record its objections through various official statements and documents (i.e., A/70/855-S/2016/406).

Within this context, I would like to remind you of the two Turkish Cypriot proposals dated 24 September 2011 and 29 September 2012 envisaging, inter alia, the establishment of an ad hoc committee for the joint exploration and exploitation of the hydrocarbon reserves. However, the Greek Cypriot side has not only refused to even discuss these proposals, but has also continued its unilateral steps, claiming that its actions were within its "sovereign rights" and disregarding the fact that sovereignty emanates equally from both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots, as also underlined in the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014. Moreover, through public statements, the Greek Cypriot side has declared, on many occasions, that it has no intention whatsoever of taking joint steps with the Turkish Cypriot side on the issue of hydrocarbons or of sharing with Turkish Cypriots any possible revenues from the hydrocarbon reserves before a settlement is reached.

As you are well aware, in their joint statements of 15 May 2016 and 14 September 2016, the two leaders expressed their aspirations of reaching a comprehensive settlement agreement in 2016. Nevertheless, past experiences have demonstrated that, if this target is to be achieved, it is of paramount importance that the process not be distracted or undermined by factors such as the hydrocarbon issue and that both sides put all their efforts towards achieving this end. Against this background, it is unfortunate that the Greek Cypriot side still opts to continue with its unilateral actions such as signing an agreement with Egypt on 31 August 2016 for the construction of a pipeline or asking the energy companies involved to speed up the development of certain gas fields. This insincere attitude, without a doubt, raises questions as to the willingness of the Greek Cypriot administration to share power with the Turkish Cypriot people.

It is high time that the international community stop turning a blind eye to the unilateral actions of the Greek Cypriot side, which aims to usurp the inherent and legitimate rights of the Turkish Cypriot people over the natural resources on and around the island. The Greek Cypriot administration should rather be encouraged to engage sincerely with the Turkish Cypriot side for a comprehensive settlement in 2016, before the current window of opportunity is closed.

I should be grateful if the present letter would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41 and 73 (a).

(*Signed*) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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